

**Yorktown Wharf and Waterfront Interpretive Area**  
**Enhancement Project No. - EN99-099-131**

**Project Location and Description**

The proposed Yorktown Wharf and Waterfront Interpretive Area improvements are designed to enhance Yorktown's accommodations for modern-day waterborne transportation (cruise boats, etc.) as well as providing a place for docking "tall-ships" and other vessels representative of the 300-year history of the Port of York (Yorktown). In addition, the project includes the restoration and adaptation of the 60-plus year old Wharf warehouse/ferry terminal building into a facility housing displays and information related to the history of the waterfront and the various types of sailing ships, steamers, ferries and other vessels that have frequented the Port of Yorktown over the course of its rich history. A conceptual plan depicting the proposed improvement is attached. The Enhancements Program award approved in 1999 (\$550,000) will help to partially fund the first phases of the project. Additional Enhancements Program funding in the amount of \$950,000 is being requested to assist in fully implementing the entire concept.

Specific elements of the project will include:

Relocated Warehouse/Ferry Terminal Building - A key component of this proposed plan is the relocation of the former freight warehouse/ferry terminal building (currently used as a Post Office) from its current position on the Yorktown Wharf to a position closer to Water Street. The current use of the building by the postal service is in the process of being discontinued. Once relocated, the building will be renovated to create an open-air public space housing historic exhibits, artifacts and interpretive material related to the Yorktown waterfront, and particularly its waterborne transportation and commerce. In preparation for its relocation and renovation, the National Park Service has prepared a report on the Character Defining Features of the building (report prepared by William D. Brookover, Historical Architect, Philadelphia Support Office). The design and implementation of the relocation and renovation effort will respect the conclusions of this report.

Reconstructed/Expanded Wharf - Once the post office building is relocated, the existing Wharf will be demolished. Current plans are for part of the concrete rubble to be used to supplement rip rap that will be installed as part of the next phase of shoreline stabilization. The shoreline stabilization element of this project is actually the third phase of a multi-year effort to

stabilize and nourish the beach along the York River. An observation deck is proposed in the location of the existing Wharf. A new Wharf/Pier is proposed to be constructed approximately 350 feet down-river. This new concrete pier will extend out into the river approximately 260 feet to provide deeper draft than the existing wharf. This improved docking facility will be designed to accommodate cruise ships (such as the Clipper Cruise Lines vessels that currently call on Yorktown approximately four times a year), dinner cruise boats, and an occasional “tall-ship” exhibit. In addition, the docking facilities will be designed to accommodate a small number of pleasure craft with the idea that Yorktown would be a popular destination for “day-sailors” on the Chesapeake Bay. No marina facilities (i.e. - fueling, servicing, permanent mooring) will be included.

Public Convenience Facilities - The concept plans include the construction of public restroom facilities as well as a shower facility intended for crew members of “tall-ships” and charter sailing vessels. Research indicates that these facilities are much-desired by the crews of some of the replica exhibit ships and charter sailing vessels that may be attracted to Yorktown’s docking facilities. The building will also include several small temporary lockers that might be used by those crew members or that could be used for temporary secure storage for bicyclists (who might also use the showers) since Yorktown is such a popular destination for local and long-distance bikers (for example, Yorktown is often the destination of bicyclists who start on the west coast and end their trip by “dipping” their bike wheels in the York River).

Public Plaza / Commons - The area surrounding the relocated post office building and between the new observation deck and the new pier is proposed to serve as an open-air passive recreational facility and will include extensive seating and relaxation areas, a performance area (for small concerts and other cultural events), extensive walkways tying into and complementing the Riverwalk system (also funded through the Transportation Enhancement Program) and linking the area to other attractions, a fountain or water-sculpture, and extensive interpretive plaques. The area will be attractively landscaped and well-lighted.

Parking Lot/Trolley Stop - A small parking lot/service drive is proposed in the area adjacent to and west of the relocated post office building. In addition, the concept plans calls for the installation of a trolley/bus stop that will provide linkages to numerous other public parking spaces in the village as well as an opportunity for trolley or bus linkages to Williamsburg or

other area destinations. This feature will be particularly beneficial at times when cruise boats dock since their passengers very often are interested in taking bus/trolley tours of the Historic Triangle area.

The Wharf and Waterfront Interpretive Area will be constructed on property that is owned by the Yorktown Trustees. The Trustees are the guardians of the Yorktown Commons, a public area along the waterfront dating back to the original platting of the village in the 1700s. The Yorktown Trustees have been active participants in the Yorktown improvement effort and have endorsed the Wharf-area design concept. Under the terms of a 1988 cooperative agreement between the Trustees and the Board of Supervisors, the County has assumed planning, maintenance and improvement responsibility for the Trustee's property and the proposed improvements will be undertaken in accordance with this agreement.